

House Resolution No. 1037

Whereas, the members of the Missouri House of Representatives hold in high esteem those Show-Me State organizations which are devoted to promulgating knowledge and preserving history; and

Whereas, the Bertha Black Rhoda Section in St. Louis, Missouri, enjoys a long, productive association with the National Council of Negro Women, an esteemed organization which was founded in 1935 by Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune to serve as a powerful example of what African-American women's organizations could do when working together with unity of purpose; and

Whereas, the officers and members of the Bertha Black Rhoda Section are participating in the 2003 Women's History Program which honors women of color who are currently serving, or who have served in the past, in the United States armed forces; and

Whereas, the history of African-American women who have patriotically and proudly sought to serve their nation in military roles is rife with instances of racial and gender barriers to achievement; and

Whereas, efforts to eliminate stereotyping and bias against black women in the armed forces began when Mildred McAfee and Dr. Mary Bethune worked in coordination with Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to allow African-Americans to serve as officers and enlisted members of the Navy WAVES during World War II; and

Whereas, with the first two black WAVES officers sworn in on December 22, 1944, a total of seventy other black women followed in their footsteps to serve under mostly integrated conditions in the 80,000-strong women's component of the Navy; and

Whereas, today's National Council of Negro Women continues to involve itself in programs designed to assist black women in obtaining civic leadership roles, as individuals searching for personal worth and spiritual freedom, and in organizational settings:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Missouri House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, join unanimously to applaud the stellar history and impressive accomplishments of the Bertha Black Rhoda Section of the National Council of Negro Women and to convey to its leaders and members this legislative body's heartiest congratulations and best wishes as they celebrate on March 29, 2003, the exemplary heritage of black women who have diligently served in the various branches of the United States military; and

Be it further resolved that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution in honor of the Bertha Black Rhoda Section of the National Council of Negro Women.

Offered by _____
Representative Theodore Hoskins
District No. 80

I, Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, First Regular Session, do certify that the above is a true and correct copy of House Resolution No. 1037, adopted March 20, 2003.

Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker